

VZCZCXRO5179  
RR RUEHBZ RUEHJO RUEHMR RUEHRN  
DE RUEH DU #0033/01 0901438  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
R 311438Z MAR 09  
FM AMCONSUL DURBAN  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 1421  
INFO RUCNSAD/SADC COLLECTIVE  
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHINGTON DC  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC  
RUEH DU/AMCONSUL DURBAN 0794

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 DURBAN 000033

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

FOR AF/S, INR

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [SF](#)

SUBJECT: VIGOROUS CAMPAIGNING AND CONTINUED INTIMIDATION: KWAZULU  
NATAL PRE-ELECTION ROUND-UP

DURBAN 00000033 001.2 OF 002

¶1. (SBU) Summary. The African National Congress (ANC) campaign machine is in high gear, and the ANC is taking advantage of every opportunity to deliver its message. Despite official pronouncements against violence, members of the ANC are still reportedly intimidating Congress of the People (COPE) and provoking Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP). Other parties continue to point out ANC failures in service delivery whenever they have the opportunity. Electoral violence, too, has seen an uptick as the election polling day approaches April 22. The provincial Independent Electoral Commission announced that it is ready for voters. End Summary.

ANC Lauds its Accomplishments

¶2. (U) KwaZulu Natal's Local Economic Development Conference took place on March 17, 2009 and Pol/Econ Officer and Pol/Econ Assistant attended. While most presenters focused on the effects of the global economic downturn, government officials took the opportunity to rally for ANC support. Premier Ndebele cited major infrastructural projects and the implementation of Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) policy in KZN as proof that the ANC government is on the right economic track. Citing a report from July 2008 that praised KZN's economic policies, Ndebele predicted continued growth in the province through 2014. Other ANC officials touted the increased access to basic amenities in KZN over the past five years.

¶3. (SBU) The Human Rights Day Celebration in Durban was marked by a heavy dose of ANC rhetoric, a dash of socialism, and a surprising sprinkling of spa treatments. P/E Officer and his family entered Durban's ABSA stadium through the main gate for the ANC-controlled Provincial Government's Human Rights Day program, not knowing there was a VVIP entrance. As they wandered through the bowels of the stadium looking for their entrance, they came upon a makeshift spa where, they were told, all pensioners over 50 could get manicures, pedicures, and body massages. They finally found their way to their seats where they could see clearly the half-full stadium. They were treated to several musical selections and standard ANC stump speeches. An irony-laden highlight was when designer-suit clad ANC leaders led the crowd in singing My Mother Was a Kitchen Girl, My Father Was a Garden Boy, That's why I'm a Socialist.

Opposition Parties Allege ANC Intimidation, Provocation

¶4. (SBU) Isolezwe, a daily Zulu newspaper, reported that on March 15, 2009 a group of about 50 people clad in Zuma t-shirts forcefully entered a community hall in Cato Manor just outside Durban and disrupted a United Democratic Movement (UDM) election meeting. The ANC members apparently thought it was a Congress

of the People (COPE) meeting; but after discovering it was a UDM meeting, the ANC crowd dispersed and allowed the UDM meeting to continue. COPE Provincial Secretary Phillip Mhlango told the P/E Assistant that COPE members in Cato Manor witnessed the incident and reported it to him.

15. (SBU) COPE Presidential Candidate Bishop Dr. Mvume Dandala's visit to the Durban University of Technology on March 20 was canceled at the last minute because the university management feared acts of political intolerance by members of the South African Students Congress (SASCO), an ANC-aligned student group.

Zuma t-shirt-clad SASCO members were seen gathering on campus in anticipation of Dr. Dandala's arrival. COPE Youth Movement National Secretary Malusi Booi said that their student members remained calm and dispersed peacefully after hearing that Dandala's visit had been canceled. P/E Assistant attended the rescheduled press conference during which Dandala outlined COPE's vision for KwaZulu Natal and accused the ANC of political violence and intolerance. COPE spokesperson Siyanda Mhlango told reporters that SASCO is 'deliberately creating chaos at universities' so that the ANC can intervene and use the platform to highlight the ANC's commitment to a peaceful election process. Meanwhile, Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) students protested the ANC Youth League's President's address at University of KwaZulu Natal in Durban.

16. (SBU) Tension between ANC and IFP supporters is growing, and the ANC-led government has contingency plans in place to call in the military to prevent outbreaks of political violence and intimidation at known hotspots. In Greytown, an ANC supporter was hospitalized after an IFP/ANC clash; and at a high school near Ladysmith, IFP supporters threatened and forced students to leave their school, according to local media. IFP national organizer, Albert Mncwango, told reporters that the ANC was responsible for the recent violence as it was deliberately provoking and attacking IFP supporters.

DURBAN 00000033 002.2 OF 002

#### Animated Multiparty Debates Continue

17. (U) On March 14, 2009, Ingabadi, a black-owned investment and operations group, hosted an election debate in Durban. Xolani Gwala, one of South African Broadcasting Cooperation's top news anchors, moderated a heated debate between ANC, COPE, Democratic Alliance (DA), Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), Women Forward (WF), African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP), UDM and South African Democratic Congress (SADC). The debate focused on what the ANC has achieved in the past five years, but COPE and IFP accused the ANC of tolerating corruption in government. The ANC defended its record but acknowledged that there is room for improvement. P/E Assistant attended the event and noted that the debate was well attended by top KZN politicians and party supporters. The debate went smoothly without any incident of political intolerance, with the exception of the standard heckling between ANC and IFP.

18. (U) On March 19, 2009 the Diakonia Council of Churches invited major political parties to share their manifestos in a public forum. P/E Assistant attended the event. Representatives from the UDM, DA, Independent Democrats (ID), and COPE participated in the briefing. The ANC and other parties took part in the first session of the debate on March 12, 2009. The issue of lack of public transport in Durban dominated the debate, and participating parties attacked the ANC for inadequate housing and deteriorating health service throughout KZN. COPE raised the issues of crime, corruption and moral decay as the biggest ANC failures.

#### IEC in KZN Ready for Voters

19. (SBU) On March 27, the KZN Independent Electoral Commission Office gave a briefing to accredited domestic election observers. P/E Officer and P/E Assistant attended the event along with representatives from several non-governmental organizations including the African Center for the Constructive

Resolution of Disputes, KZN Democracy and Elections Forum, and Umkhanyakude Religious Leaders. Mawethu Mosery of the IEC said that KZN is fully prepared for the election but will need the help of election observers to ensure that all parties `remain noble'. Preserving the secrecy of the ballot is paramount in rural KZN as many traditional leaders still yield great power and practice political intimidation, according to guest speaker and crime/political violence expert Mary De Haas. De Haas predicts continued violence and intimidation in the run up to the election but nothing on the scale of the 1994 elections when thousands died.

¶10. (SBU) Ntomb'futhi Masinga, IEC Election Manager, advised observers to be on the lookout for party officials who may wrongly directly voters to party registration tables. While parties may set up tents to offer refreshments, voters are not required to check in at these tents, where they may be influenced. Also, if observers plan to visit the Greytown area, they should observe if polling stations are able to cope with an expected 20,000 out-of-area voters who will be attending a men's conference. As an aside, Masinga noted that the Greytown surge will be nothing compared to the expected 40,000 South Africans who have registered to vote at the London embassy. When asked how the London embassy would accommodate so many voters, Mosery replied, `We will rent out a large hall and send reinforcements. Don't worry, if we can accommodate 23 million voters in South Africa, we can do the job in London.

DERDERIAN